

EUROPEAN ALLIANCE FOR APPRENTICESHIPS

Skills in the food and drink industry: challenge, opportunity and agenda for action

In July 2014, more than 5 million young people in Europe were unemployed – that's 21.7% of Europeans between the ages of 15 and 24¹. In order to contribute to Europe's economy now and ensure the competitiveness of our labour force in the future, efforts are needed to **promote practical experience** through placements for students and young graduates.

As a dynamic and growing sector, **Europe's food and drink industry** is a driving force behind apprenticeship schemes. But efforts to develop specific qualifications to enhance the employability of people and reinforce life-long training programmes are only effective with the **right partnerships** in place. Building on this premise, **FoodDrinkEurope** has joined forces with the **European Federation of Trade Unions in the Food, Agriculture and Tourism sectors (EFFAT)** to respond to one of the greatest challenges facing Europe: a lack of skills and job opportunities.

Working together, the two organisations became social partners in 2012 and jointly commissioned 'Improve', the UK Sector Skills Council, and 'CERES'², the Centre for Economic and Social Research, in 2013 to undertake a study on food and drink manufacturing and processing (FDMP) labour market across the European Union.

This research, which was supported financially by the European Commission, stresses the **importance of the FDMP industry for the whole European economy and its employment**, stating that this sector employs approximately 4.5 million people³.

The research puts forward important recommendations for the EU food and drink manufacturing and processing sector's social partners. One important conclusion of this study is that "the European Commission needs to recognise the importance of the FDMP sector to the EU economy and should develop a specific **industrial policy that supports the further development and growth of the sector in the future**".

On this fundamental basis and in accordance with their **work programme, the social partners want to follow up on two complementary objectives of labour market policies**: i) to **fight youth unemployment** and ii) **build up labour supply**. FoodDrinkEurope and EFFAT have been awarded a grant by the European Commission to address the challenges of youth unemployment and better management of older workers in a project entitled "*Bringing in new talents and managing an ageing workforce: two sides of the same coin. Implementing good practices for a more attractive food and drink industry in Europe*".

This project, to be finalised by mid-2016, will support social partners to **strengthen traineeship and apprenticeship programmes, develop career pathways, ensure a sustainable workforce** in the future and **keep the sector attractive** for the workforce already engaged.

¹Source: Eurostat http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/3-29082014-AP/EN/3-29082014-AP-EN.PDF

²www.ce-res.org

³Labour market research study of the Social Partners in the EU Food and Drink Industry « Ensuring sustainable employment and competitiveness in the EU Food and Drink industry : meeting the challenges of the labour market » 2013: http://www.fooddrinkeurope.eu/uploads/publications_documents/Final_Report.pdf





AN APPETITE FOR THE FUTURE: YOUTH APPRENTICESHIPS IN THE FOOD AND DRINK INDUSTRY

The food and drink industry Apprenticeships Pledge

FoodDrinkEurope and **EFFAT** will encourage Europe's food and drink industry to:

1. Provide **high quality apprenticeship and traineeship positions**
2. Organize **readiness for work programmes** (career consultation, CV clinics, etc.) in close coordination with educational institutions and youth organisations
3. **Share knowledge and experiences** with education providers, authorities at all levels, trade unions, business organisations (with a particular focus on small and medium sized businesses) and youth associations through the European Alliance for Apprenticeship Ambassador Network

FoodDrinkEurope and EFFAT will ensure that this pledge is an integral part of an EU-funded research project that they are planning to undertake over the next couple of years. Furthermore, this project aims, amongst other things, to facilitate the uptake of high quality apprenticeship and traineeship positions in food manufacturing companies across the EU, with a particular focus on small and medium sized businesses.

Our pledge will raise awareness amongst our members throughout Europe of the valuable contribution that apprentices and trainees can make to their work and encourage them to provide more opportunities for young people to work in their business.

The stakeholders taking part in this pledge are food and drink companies and their supply chain, trade unions, education providers, European/national/regional authorities and agencies, business organisations and youth associations.

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